



# Historic Preservation Newsletter

## How to Research your Historic Home

Often new homeowners are intrigued with the clues left by past residents of their property. They might find a piece of old wallpaper hidden in the corner of a closet or a bit of old newspaper caught in the crawl space. These clues highlight the fact that we are only temporary stewards of our houses. Our houses' memories are generational.

A lot more information about past residents can be garnered from one afternoon in the Indiana Room of the Monroe County Public Library. There you will find a collection of local resources: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, City Directories starting in 1900, death and marriage records, and census information. About the only other stop you might need will be at the Monroe County Courthouse to do deed research or the Monroe County Historical Society to delve further into genealogical research.

Fire Insurance maps are available for most of the cities and small towns in Indiana. Our earliest date

from 1892 but they cover only a small area of downtown. Sanborn maps are color coded to show building materials. They also provide information about the number of stories, windows, and the location of outbuildings. They resemble modern aerial photography, but Sanborn maps are hand drawn and colored by surveyors, according to the technology of the day. So they will provide a snapshot of the footprint of your home in a previous era.

City Directories can be used if you know either the name or the (continued on page 2)



*This family home on South Lincoln was restored with funds from HAND and BRI.*

## City of Bloomington Interim Report Published!

Although it is required by the federal government, the City of Bloomington is one of only three municipal governments in Indiana to independently survey and publish its own interim report. The others are Fort Wayne and South Bend/ St. Joseph. This is the third survey of historic properties that the city has published. The first was finished in 1978, several

years before the modern publication format was developed. The second, and the one that is commonly known as "the Bloomington survey" was used from 1986 through 2001. The new survey covers over 2550 properties and several new historic neighborhoods. Some of these are called districts and some are called study areas.

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### Special points of interest:

- ♦ Research your home
- ♦ Buy an Interim Report
- ♦ New history of Bloomington



## How to Research continued

address because they are cross-referenced. They provide information about professions, businesses and until 1940 or so, you could verify race and marital status.

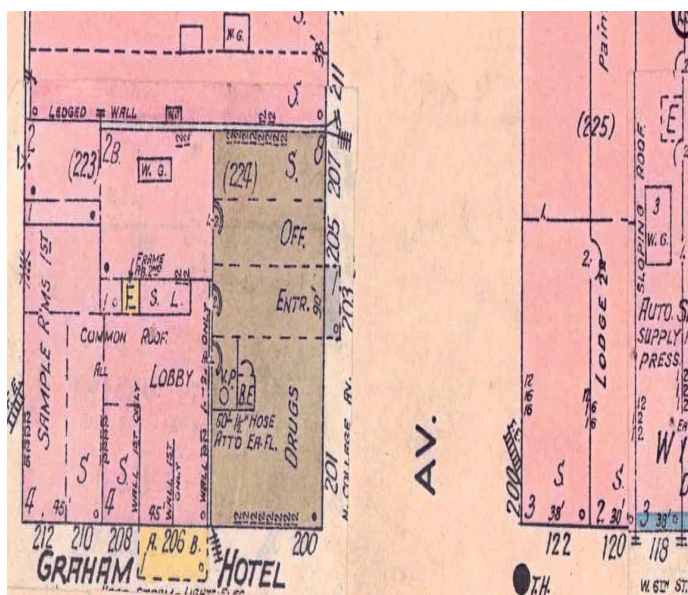
Census data is available from the 1830's and it includes a variety of information about residents such as whether they own or rent their house, their place of birth, occupation, literacy, as well as wonderful random facts that were collected such as, in 1930, whether the occupants owned a radio! The data collected differs slightly for each census.

Also some of us will be able to research using a fast disappearing document: the property abstract. These are thick sheaves of legal documents that trace the ownership of land through time. The date of construction can usually only be assumed by the date when the assessment dramatically increases. Today abstracts are disappearing as they are confiscated by title companies and their information is converted to CD's. But many are still locked and forgotten in safe deposit boxes. Finally, for more information: look in the new Interim Report!

## Interim Report continued

The difference is in architectural integrity. Areas called districts are eligible for the National Register, while study areas have many structures that have been inappropriately remodeled or a large number of non-contributing buildings (new or lacking in integrity).

During the new survey, it was thought best to cast a wide net incorporating many Bloomington neighborhoods developed in the late 20's and 30's that were previously overlooked. These areas include many revival style homes which were popular at the time. The rising middle classes were fascinated by imitation



*This circa 1927 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the corner of 6th and College shortly before the construction of the new Graham Hotel in 1929. The color pink means brick construction and blue is limestone. See the use of veneer on the Wicks Building which had been remodeled in 1915 with "Chicago style" windows and piers.*

chateau, Spanish missions, and Tudor castles. Indigenous styles like the American foursquare and colonial were also popular and largely overlooked in 1986. Elm Heights, and East Second Street Historic Districts represent the largest inventory of houses of these styles.

"The rising middle classes were fascinated by imitation chateau, Spanish missions, and Tudor castles."

## Kit homes and bungalows

Only a few years ago it was possible to use the word "bungalow" and have a good deal of consensus about what it meant. Today five different kinds of bungalows have been identified in the survey: California, Dormer-front, Western, Side Gable, Cross Gable, and the Double Cross-gable (also known as Airplane) bungalow.



All describe different forms of a small (900 to 1600 square foot) house built from 1910 through 1930.

*Western Bungalow in the Cottage Grove Historic District*  
Each community brought their own unique resources to bear on these designs. In Bloomington, there are dozens of limestone bungalows, although the use of such an expensive material was impossible in most cities in the U.S. The bungalow largely replaced the earlier Gabled-ell as the most common form of working class home in Bloomington. In neighborhoods such as McDoel, Bryan Park, and Monon, which are newly surveyed areas, bungalows are the predominant form.

One district, in the 600-700 block of East University, is identified by its large number of high style arts and crafts bungalows including one with pagoda style flared eaves.



## Ethnic, Gender And Industrial History

Perhaps the most exciting development in the 2001 interim report is the inclusion of several new categories of districts and buildings based upon new interest in ethnic and gender history. When the Home Laundry Building was listed on the National Register in 1999, it was placed there largely because of its illustration of women's history. During the era of its construction, the Home Laundry building housed the steam machinery that dramatically improved the efficiency of commercial laundering. Laundering, however was still seen as domestic work and still done largely by women. The listing of the Home Laundry commemorates women's entry into the 20th century manufacturing environment.

The Coca-Cola Bottling Plant was designed by the Coca-Cola Company and is a good example of the imprint of corporate America on architecture. As national brands began to supplant regional products, more and more buildings were designed to be readily



identifiable advertisements for the brand name.

There are also landmarks that express the passing of eras in social history, some shameful and some triumphant. The Banneker School, which housed a segregated grade school from 1915 to 1952, is a mixture of both. It appears as "historic" for the first time on the 2001 survey. Last year a BHSN high school club, named SAVE, collected and recorded oral histories from the surviving pupils of the school.

## Two New National Register Districts

### Millen House and Vinegar Hill

Locally more familiar as "Raintree House," the Millen House, at 112 North Bryan in Green Acres, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on September 29th. The nomination was funded by the Organization of American Historians, who have occupied the building for 30 years.

While researching the property, several stories surfaced about the house's possible connection to the underground railroad. At least two local residents can recall tours of the house that were given in the 1950's. Scout troops were told of an area near the chimney in the attic where escaped slaves were supposedly hidden. John Dichtl, deputy director of the OAH, continued to delve into existing documents and papers. Although no definitive proof exists that the house was so used, Dichtl discovered that the father of William Millen left a will freeing his slaves and providing them with \$300 to build a new life. William Millen was part of a wave of early Bloomington settlers from South Carolina who were ethnically Scotch Irish Presbyterians. Their influence survives in the contemporary landscape through the Covenanter Cemetery, the Thomas Smith House on Pick Wick Place and the Faris House in Stier Park.

In mid-October, Bloomington Restorations, Inc. hosted a house tour that drew over 500 visitors to Vinegar Hill. This area of town has been of perennial interest, because it contains some of the grandest and most ornately appointed homes in the city. Vinegar Hill is a neighborhood built by the limestone barons of Monroe County in their heyday. Vinegar Hill has been recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission for

placement in the National Register. The nomination will be heard in January by the State Board of Review.

The Commission will sponsor a Vinegar Hill presentation by Joanne Stuttgen on Wednesday, Dec. 15th at 7:30 PM at the Monroe County Public Library. Early residents of the neighborhood will also appear and share memories of growing up along "the street that limestone built."



**Mazzullo House 1002 East First Street**

City of Bloomington



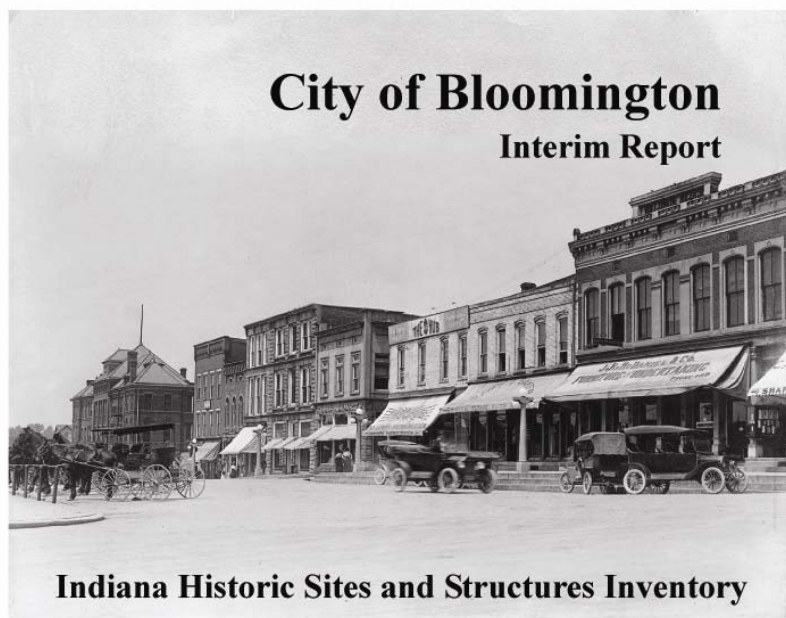
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Housing and Neighborhood  
Development

### Where can I Purchase Mine?

The Interim Report is available to purchase at the offices of HAND in Showers City Hall at 401 North Morton. The cost at that location is \$15.00. It is also for sale at the Monroe County History Center and Howard's Bookstore. Reference copies are available to read in the Indiana Room of the Monroe County Library and the Genealogy Room of the Monroe County History Center.

Publication of the Interim Report was funded by a Historic Preservation Fund Grant from the Indiana Division of Historic preservation and Archaeology.



**Find Your Place in History**